

FRENCH INDO-CHINA

of Laotian bonzes was well below Cambodian standards, so it was impractical to count on the same degree of co-operation from them,

In 1931 the government reluctantly pulled itself together to remedy this admittedly bad situation. Certain provinces and certain bonzes selected as fields for experimentation. An itinerant teacher was sent around to the pagoda schools to conduct model classes with a very simple programme, as a practical demonstration before the bonzes. Blackboards, textbooks, and chalk were doled out to these schools which had heretofore lacked even such elementary equipment. Bonzes were asked to report semi-annually on the number and progress of pupils. Slowly an examination was organized with a certificate, so as to set up some standard and to stimulate the sluggish Laotian zeal for knowledge. The problem of further training for bonzes is delicate. The idea of a small scale Normal School was again revived in 1932 and attempts were made to avoid some of the pitfalls which had doomed earlier experiments. The majority of bonzes still could not teach reading or writing. They were less than half-hearted in following the government's ideas, and would break training at the slightest provocation, thus automatically condemning their schools. The new ones are more modern in method, more prudent in application, and more successful in their results than the old, but it is too soon as yet to draw any conclusions about that elusive and infinitesimal effort known as Laotian education. Less than 300 schools teach fewer than 7,000 in French Laos.

In April 1881 two priests from the Society of Foreign Missions

to Oubooe, where they found not a single native
'Christian. On a
they later made throughout Laos they found only
four Christinii
in the whole country^ two Siamese and two
Annamites. When
to evangelize Laos the current anarchy bred by the
Ho invasions,
deportations, and the perennial economic
uncertainty
to an number of conversions. With the
establish-
of the Fitachy security was assured, and the
number of
to decline, 'The ease of the early 'Conversions bad
centuries of persecution and uncertainty the
a marked flak for success. They know to a fine
it & worth their while to please. Mope-
over, die the usual Asiatic indifference to
'dogma*
is as to *m* provided it does
art impact the
8ft